

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Michael Leigh, a Doctor in Political Sciences, is currently Director General of the European Commission's General Directorate for Enlargement. Previously, he has been responsible for the EC's departments in charge of developing the European Neighbourhood Policy and for accession negotiations with candidate countries.

Fethiye Cetin (Turkey) is the author of the "My Grandmother", first published in Turkish in 2004, which has been translated into several languages. Fethiye Cetin is a lawyer by profession and has worked on human rights law and particularly on the rights of the minorities. She was the lawyer of Hrant Dink and currently is the legal representative of the Dink family.

Osman Köker (Turkey) is a historian and a journalist, author of many books and articles relating to minorities in Turkey, including on the Armenian minority. He is the creator of the exhibition "My Dear Brother/Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago" which is based entirely on historical postcards. Osman Köker also runs a publishing house, Birzamanlar Yayıncılık.

Patrick Donabedian (France) is an art historian and teaches at the Université de Provence (Aix-en-Provence). He is a prominent specialist of armenian culture and history and has written numerous books about Armenian art, culture and history.

Ara Sarafian (UK) is a historian specializing in the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. He was a founding director of the Gomidas Institute, and has edited and written critical introductions to several of the institute's publications. Now director of the Taderon Press, he is developing the Sterndale Classics imprint.

Vahé Tachjian (Germany), a historian, is a research fellow at the Berlin's Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung. His research covers the period of the French occupation of Cilicia, Syria and Lebanon between the two World Wars, the last years of the Ottoman Empire, refugee problems in the Middle East and Kurdish-Armenian relations. He has written extensively on the subject.

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CONFERENCE

A Journey of Cultural Rediscovery: Armenian Heritage in Turkey



Thursday 13 November 2008

9.30am-1.00pm-Room ASP 3G3

European Parliament, Brussels



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
The Green Political Foundation

Rue Wiertz/Wiertzstraat 60
B-1047 Brussels

Armenian culture and heritage are truly those of a Diaspora people, scattered throughout the European continent and well beyond. But most Armenian cultural heritage outside the Republic of Armenia originates in today's Turkey.

This legacy has been taboo in Turkey, as the republic tried to forget its Armenians after the 1915 genocide, whose very evocation is highly controversial there. Over the 20th Century, very many buildings and artefacts that betrayed the Armenian presence have been destroyed or left to decay, and much has been forgotten. But much also remains, that can be reclaimed from oblivion.

A journey of rediscovery is now underway in Turkey. After many decades in which the very memory of the Armenian presence in Anatolia had disappeared from public consciousness, opinion leaders and the general public are beginning to rediscover the country's Armenian heritage.

These efforts are exemplified by the success of such cultural productions as a photo exhibition called "My Dear Brother" and of several novels and artistic productions. Armenians, whether in the EU, in Turkey or in Armenia, have an interest in sharing in this rediscovery. It is time Europe too rediscovered Armenian heritage in Turkey.

This rediscovery is important and the EU should embrace it :

- The ability of Turkish society to conduct a conversation about Armenian presence and heritage is a litmus test for the current opening up of Turkish society.
- Turkey's cultural diversity, if it is acknowledged, is a source of social vigour, economic strength and international credit for the country.
- Europe, finally, is also about culture and heritage. The EU has a mandate for heritage conservation: it has committed itself to the protection of cultural capital in the EU as well as in candidate country Turkey.

This conference aims to highlight the process of rediscovery underway and to illustrate it through the work of some of the individuals involved. It will show how much is to be gained by joining in this public conversation in Turkey and internationally and by helping to rediscover and salvage what previous generations have passed on to us. It will also highlight the relevance of this development from an EU perspective and outline some avenues to explore in order to move the process forward.

This conference is organized by AGBU Europe under the patronage of Bernard Lehideux ,MEP, with the support of the ADLE group. It is a contribution to the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue.

AGBU Europe gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Brussels office.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

9.30 Cultural Rediscovery? A Welcome and Introduction

Nicolas Tavitian, AGBU Europe

9.40 EU Enlargement and the Dialogue of Cultures

Michael Leigh, Director General, European Commission Directorate General for Enlargement

10.00 Turkey Rediscovered its Armenian Heritage

Fethiye Cetin, Author, "My Grandmother"

10.20 The Armenian Contribution to Turkey

Osman Köker, historian, creator of the exhibition "My Dear Brother"

10.40 Armenian Cultural Heritage in Turkey

Patrick Donabedian, Professeur, Université de Provence

11.00 Europe's Armenian Cultural Heritage from Turkey

Vahe Tachjian, historian, Nubarian Library, AGBU

11.20 Salvage and Nurture: Re-Inventing Turkish Armenians

Ara Sarafian, historian

11.40 -13.00 Panel Discussion : the European Union and the Turkish - Armenian Story

Cem Özdemir, MEP, *Ulrike Dufner*, Director of the Istanbul office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and *Alexis Govciyan*, President, AGBU Europe

13.00 Reception

Registration

To register, please fill in the form attached to this leaflet or write to AGBU indicating your full name, address and date of birth. *Please note that access to the Parliament will not be possible without advance registration.*

Registration deadline: November 4, 2008